/37 cont./

been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc. The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in consequence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is